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# Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Freight and Goods Movement Takes Center Stage as Conferees Debate Surface Transportation Bill** *Senate EPW Committee Chair Boxer and FHWA Administrator Mendez Keynote Coalition's Annual Meeting*

**WASHINGTON, DC (May 9, 2012)** – Hours after the first meeting of surface transportation bill conferees, the Coalition for America's Gateways and Trade Corridors (CAGTC) kicked off its 2012 annual meeting, themed *"Don't Leave Our Freight System to Chance."* Freight interests and CAGTC members from across the nation have assembled in Washington to champion a national freight program with increased federal investment.

"The country needs us to pass a surface transportation bill so that we can fix our aging infrastructure, put people back to work, and boost the economy. The health of our businesses, workers, and communities depend on it," stated Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee Chairman Barbara Boxer (D-CA).

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) President Pam O'Connor and SCAG Board Officer Greg Pettis are in Washington, D.C. and met with Chairman Boxer and other conferees in support of Senate Bill 1813, "Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21). Joining them was the Executive Director of Job's First Alliance, Wally Baker, to verify the importance of job creation in Southern California.

"Southern California lost a million jobs since the 2007 recession. Passage of this important transportation legislation would preserve the current 2.9 million jobs that provide goods movement and related manufacturing/logistic support in our region," said President O'Connor.

"Congress must act on this legislation before the bill expires June 30<sup>th</sup>. Our residents expect Congress to do their job and ensure collected gas tax revenues are returned to California to repair our highways and bridges, and move goods to the rest of the nation," stated Board Member Pettis.

CAGTC has long called for a comprehensive goods movement policy, with funding commensurate to our nation's vast system needs. A commitment to investment in goods movement infrastructure and dedicated funding for a freight program is critical for America to ensure a safe, efficient, reliable, multimodal supply chain that will continue to stoke the engine of commerce and support jobs growth.

“Our nation’s economic recovery depends on safe and efficient freight movement,” said Federal Highway Administrator Victor Mendez, who is delivering keynote remarks at the CAGTC annual meeting. “By reducing the cost of doing business, improved coordination among ground, rail, air and maritime shipping will move our nation forward and accelerate the economy’s rebound.”

Later today, more than 15 Members of Congress, many of whom are conferees on the surface transportation reauthorization bill, will address the Coalition’s Goods Movement Reception. “We applaud the Members’ recognition that investment in freight is an important step in strengthening our economy and hope the conferees work will focus the nation’s eye on the importance of our national freight network,” said Coalition Chairman Mortimer Downey.

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***About SCAG***

*SCAG is the nation’s largest metropolitan planning organization, representing six counties, 191 cities and more than 18 million residents. SCAG undertakes a variety of planning and policy initiatives to plan for a livable and sustainable Southern California now and in the future. For more information about SCAG’s regional efforts, please visit [www.scag.ca.gov](http://www.scag.ca.gov).*